

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6506

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 07, 2008

**Title:** An act relating to the medical disciplinary act.

**Brief Description:** Creating a system for enforcing discipline in medical professions.

**Sponsors:** Senators Marr, Kastama and Parlette.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 1/24/08, 2/07/08 [DPS-WM].  
Ways & Means: 2/11/08.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6506 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Fairley, Kastama, Kohl-Welles and Marr.

**Staff:** Edith Rice (786-7444)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Staff:** Maria Hovde (786-7710)

**Background:** The Medical Quality Assurance Commission (MQAC) establishes, monitors, and enforces qualifications for physician and physician assistant licensure, standards of practice, and continuing competency. MQAC regulates approximately 19,000 physicians and 1,500 physician assistants. MQAC is composed of twenty-one members appointed by the Governor and six pro-tem members appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Health (Secretary). Members serve four year staggered terms. The Secretary currently appoints the MQAC executive director. The executive director provides direction to the professional and administrative personnel of the MQAC.

All health professions are regulated under the Uniform Disciplinary Act 18.130 RCW (UDA). The UDA provides the legal procedural framework for addressing complaints about health professionals and defines what constitutes unprofessional conduct.

The Health Profession Quality Assurance (HPQA) office is located within the Department of Health and regulates the competency and quality of all credentialed health care providers.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

This office provides the personnel who support the boards, commissions, and advisory committees that regulate the 57 health care professions. This includes the MQAC.

In May 2006 the Governor requested that the State Auditor do a performance audit of the HPQA within the Department of Health. The Performance Audit Report for HPQA was made available August 21, 2007. Recommendations encompassed a wide variety of issue areas including public education, credentialing, background checks, delays, performance measures, sanctions, and disaster recovery.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute):** The Medical Quality Assurance Commission (MQAC) Pilot Project is created, beginning July 1, 2008 to last for three years. The pilot project will evaluate the effect of the MQAC having increased authority over budgeting and staffing issues. The Secretary of the Department of Health will hire an executive director for MQAC with approval from the MQAC. The Executive Director will manage employees and prepare a budget. The MQAC and the Secretary will develop key performance measures and report results to the Legislature and the Governor by December 15, 2012.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute):** The Medical Board for Safety and Quality created by the original bill is replaced by the pilot program described above.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 18, 2008.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: (Health & Long-Term Care) PRO:** We need to be able to move quickly on disciplinary cases to protect patient safety. This bill will strengthen accountability by reporting directly to the Governor.

**Persons Testifying (Health & Long-Term Care):** PRO: Senator Marr, prime sponsor; Len Eddinger, Washington State Medical Association; Tim Layton, Washington State Medical Association.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Recommended Substitute (Ways & Means):** PRO: This bill is the first step in helping to ensure public confidence in quality of care and in meeting the highest standards of practice.

**Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):** PRO: Carl Nelson, Washington State Medical Association.